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Childhood Ventures In Christian Service

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53. Childhood Ventures in Christian Service. *Religious Education.*

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The Children of the Church

Speaking Through

The Triennial Report of the Church School Service League

Presented by

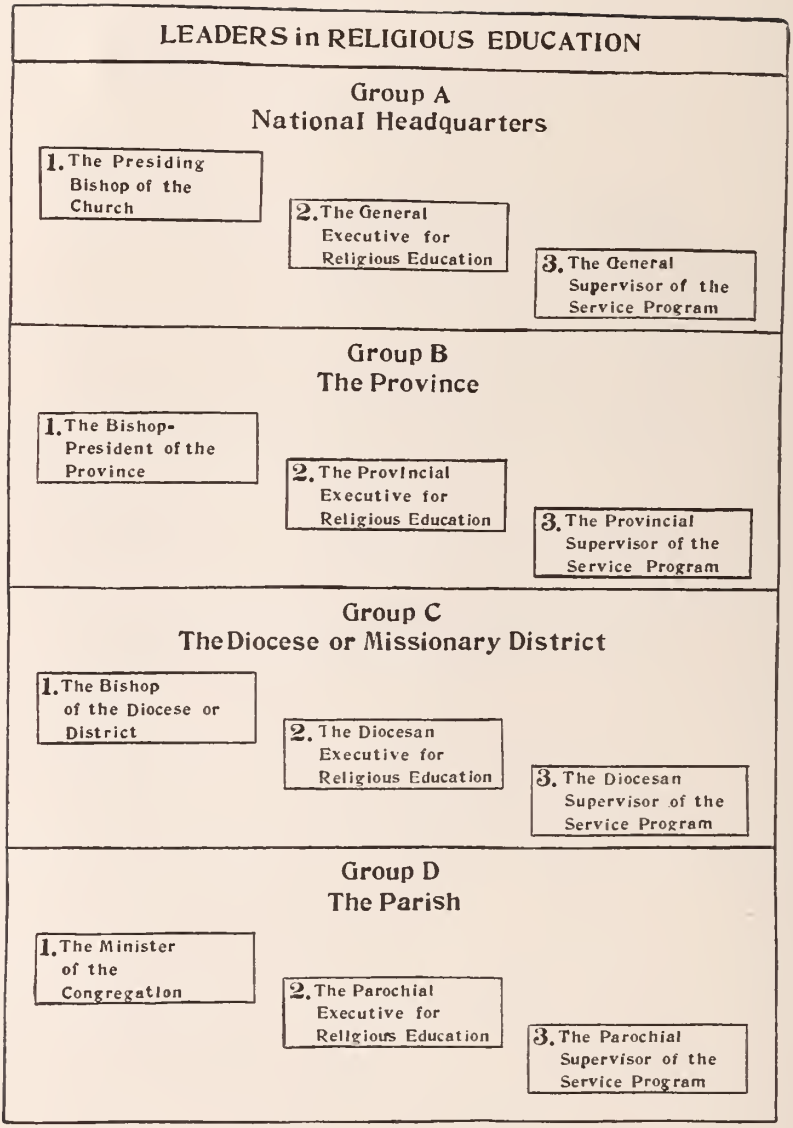
FRANCES H. WITHERS

AT NEW ORLEANS, OCTOBER 7, 1925

Together with Foreword

by

The Rev. John W. Suter, Jr.


LEADERS in RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
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1. The Presiding Bishop of the Church
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3. The General Supervisor of the Service Program
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Group D
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1. The Minister of the Congregation
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3. The Parochial Supervisor of the Service Program

FOREWORD

A corps of leaders in Church School Service League work all over the country, and a host of friends of the League everywhere, are asking what has happened. Word has gone out that there is no League any more. But this is only partly true; and what truth there is in it is complimentary to the League.

The national Department of Religious Education no longer initiates, maintains, or runs a national Church School Service League. There are Church School Service Leagues in many provinces, dioceses, and parishes; but these are locally established and locally controlled. The present arrangement results from the fact that the Church School Service League movement has been so ably led and so vigorously promoted that it has convinced the educational leaders of the Church that a "Curriculum of Good Works" (or "Graded Service") must be recognized as one of the essential parts of every good religious-education program, and that consequently it cannot be relegated or confined to any particular club or society. Therefore, from now on no Church School that does not give its members training in Service is considered a "regular school." In other words, a child, in order to become as it were "liable" for Service to his neighbors, need join only a Church School;—or, indeed, only a Church.

The national Department of Religious Education issues to all parishes suggestions for training children in Worship, for training them in Service, and for instructing them in the Truth; but the Department does not presume to say through what form of organization these three endeavors shall locally be made. We are not organizers. We aspire to be producers and distributors of ideas,—*guides* of organizers. (This point is further developed in the pamphlet, *Next Steps in Religious Education*, pages 49 to 59 inclusive. Copies may be obtained from The Book Store, Church Missions House, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Price 15 cents.)

By its very nature the national Department of Religious Education, being a branch of the official government of the Church, can sponsor only such enterprises as are essential to religious education. A national *League* for Service is not thus essential. A national *Program* of Service is. A parallel case is found in the matter of Church Schools. We try to furnish ideas for Church School leaders; but we do not create or maintain a national League of Church Schools or their members.

In order properly to guide this service the national Department of Religious Education has a secretary in charge of the work under whose supervision a Service Program Committee will continue in each diocese and missionary district. The chairman of this committee is the Diocesan Supervisor of the Service Program. The committee should include a Christmas Box Secretary, a Birthday Thank Offering Secretary, a Lenten Offering Secretary, a Little Helper's Offering Secretary, and anyone else who is needed to carry on the work. Similarly, each parish should have a committee on the Service Program with a supervisor as chairman, though it will not be necessary in most cases to have as many members as on the diocesan committee.

In a small parish the entire Service Program may be directed by the supervisor.

For a further discussion of the "Curriculum of Service" see The Spirit of Missions for May, 1926, which contains an article on this subject on the page devoted to the Department of Religious Education.

I trust that the foregoing statement makes clear not only the present situation but also the deep feeling of friendliness and gratitude which the national Department of Religious Education has towards Church School Service League leaders wherever they may be found.

John W. Suter, Jr.

281 Fourth Avenue,
April, 1926.

TRIENNIAL REPORT
CHURCH SCHOOL SERVICE LEAGUE

By Frances H. Withers

GREETINGS:

Once again I am privileged to present to a body of leaders the triennial report of the Church School Service League. Many of you who are here today were in Detroit six years ago when the momentous step was taken of separating the Junior Department from the Woman's Auxiliary and merging it into the Church School Service League. Again, you were present in Portland three years ago when we met and reviewed the results of having taken this step and together formulated plans for furthering the training of boys and girls in world-wide service for our Lord Christ. I cannot pay too high a tribute to the many men and women who have seen what the vision of service to mankind in Christ's Name will mean to the world, and through whose efforts the boys and girls are being led to the same vision.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Presiding Bishop of the Church, the Rt. Rev. Ethelbert Talbot, presented the first resolution that was ever offered in the Church regarding the Church School Service League. This was on December 10, 1918, when I first explained the plan of service in the Five Fields to the old Board of Missions. Bishop Talbot then offered a resolution to the Board "commending the plan and urging its adoption in parish life."

Looking back over the intervening years what do we find has been accomplished? Perhaps one of the greatest things is that boys and girls are learning to meet life problems in the Christian way. They are learning to serve, through working and giving, studying, praying, in fellowship with their own group and with those whom they seek to serve.

WORK IN THE FIVE FIELDS

The Parish Through a *Parish Project* the child comes to realize that the parish is an integral part of the Church, but is efficient just so far as it produces active, intelligent workers in all fields, and ministers to the needs of others through gifts of money, service, and life.

The Church School need no longer lack models, sand-trays, tables, etc., for boys and girls now make them, as well as processional crosses, bulletin boards, picture frames and pew desks for use in the Church School. The guilds are provided with dusters, dish cloths, aprons. Boys and girls arrange leaflets and take care of vestments. They help to repair Church buildings; they act as janitors; they aid the Church Periodical Club. In every way boys and girls are standing ready to do whatsoever their rectors, vestries, or parish societies ask from them.

Community Through a *Community Project* there is developed in the boys and girls a feeling of gratitude and appreciation of all the privileges and opportunities that the Community affords them, resulting in a realization of an obligation to render some service in return.

Direct contacts are more easily made in the Community than in the wider fields. They provide the boys and girls with more opportunities for the actual practice of the principle of brotherhood laid down by Jesus Christ.

The Church's work among the foreign born has a very definite place in the Community Program. There are thousands of children of the foreign born who have not the right kind of American friends and who never go inside a Church School because no one has been the kind of friend who would invite them to come. This is an opportunity for Church boys and girls. Each can be a missionary by making a special effort to form at least one such friendship and bring the friend to the Church School.

From the many acts of service that were reported I can only take a few. Conducting play classes at a settlement; providing milk for district nurses; coal for needy families; fresh eggs for the sick; daily luncheon for under-nourished children; gathering linen and selling papers for hospitals; making sunshine bags, layettes; Noah's Arks for Children's Homes; giving a pageant in a prison; visiting the sick and lonely in the town; teaching Church-School lessons to children in hospitals; joining Community Campaigns.

Diocese Through a *Diocesan Project* the boys and girls are brought to a clearer understanding of the organization and administration of their diocese. They are helped to know that

the diocese is the unit of the General Church through which their own Church School works.

Reports show that boys and girls are rapidly developing this consciousness. They are feeling a responsibility in helping to establish Churches and Missions in their own diocese, they are providing equipment for diocesan missions such as Altar crosses, vestments, and kneeling pads, etc. They are adopting Church Schools; providing the materials for them; helping in the teaching; leading in the Service Program. They give fruit and vegetables for Church Homes, they make gifts for diocesan suit-cases. In fact, they place themselves at the call of their Bishops, ready to do whatever he needs.

Nation Through a *National Project* the boys and girls are brought into relationship with other boys and girls in the mission field, coming to know Indians, Mountaineers, and Negroes as their neighbors. A spirit of fellowship is developed resulting in the desire to share their blessings with these neighbors, to receive help from them and to work together for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. One way that this desire to share is expressed is through the Christmas Box. The provincial plan of assigning the boxes has been put into effect, each province in rotation providing for each of the mission fields.

In January, 1923, the handling of the assignment, correspondence, etc., was assigned to the Supply Department at the Missions House. This did not mean that there was any change in the diocese or parish. The work continues as the Christmas Box Work of the Church School Service League, and the promotion of the work has remained in the hands of the Secretary for the Church School Service League in the Department of Religious Education.

In 1924, gifts were sent to 58,153 individuals in our missions at home and abroad. This is an increase of 16,810 over the number reported for 1923, and 53,000 over the number reported in Portland, 1922.

The Red Cross, the Church Periodical Club, the Seamen's Church Institute and the Church's Program all received due attention. Thus the boys and girls come to the realization that each one has a responsibility in helping to make our country a truly Christian Nation.

World Through a *World Project* the sympathy of the boys and girls is deepened and their interest broadened still further resulting in the attitude that "Missions," so called, is not something additional to the normal life of the Church, but is absolutely essential to the Church's life: a carrying forward of her "Mission."

Mission Study

In the course of the year our boys and girls realize their fellowship with God's people all over the world. They take their part in the affairs of the home and parish. They study conditions in their Community to learn how best to help their neighbors who are near at hand. They respond to the calls for help in the Nation, and when the special call to service comes in Lent they set aside a special period for an intensive study of the work of the Church in some one of the Missionary districts.

During the Triennium the subjects studied have been Africa, Japan, and China. Each year four graded books on the current subject were prepared or recommended. The text books of the Missionary Education Movement are used in connection with these. For two years the Girls' Friendly Society and the Church School Service League collaborated in preparing the teaching programs for the High School books issued by the Missionary Education Movement.

Reports show that each year an increasing number of Mission Study classes are held.

Lenten Offering

The great project in Christian Stewardship for boys and girls is the Lenten Offering. Mission Study is placed in Lent in order that it may stimulate this offering.

The Japanese Reconstruction Fund received a large offering from the boys and girls. The Near East Relief was also the recipient of clothing and money.

The Call to Service

Following the recommendation of the leaders at the last Triennial meeting, the Call to Service for use in Lent was the following year based on the Five Fields. But for the past two

years the weekly topics have been the same as the subjects on the Lenten Posters. The leaflets have served as an aid in developing the spiritual side of the Lenten Offering. In 1924, they were used by 150,000 boys and girls.

Prayer

Boys and girls formulated their own prayers for parish and home, and for the other fields of service. We believe that prayer is the greatest factor in the Service Program, for if work is to be done effectively for Christ it must depend on Him through Prayer. Perhaps in no diocese is this dependence better expressed than in Western New York where there is a devotional committee which has in charge the Fellowship of Prayer.

Study

Christian service must be intelligent. Through graded study boys and girls learn to know for whom they are working, and why. They learn the histories of the parish and the diocese, the Church's Program, the relation of the Church to the Community and Nation, all that goes to help make an intelligent Christian citizen.

Gifts

Gifts included money for hundreds of objects, but greater than money was the gift of time and self on the part of thousands of boys and girls who recognized the fact that God wants them to give of themselves to carry on the Mission of the Church.

Fellowship

There are many acts of fellowship reported. Seniors helping with Little Helper's meetings; Juniors giving entertainments for Primary children; Grammar grades entertaining the Woman's Auxiliary; Primary children giving a party for mothers; Kindergarten children having a doll's party for other little children. The climax of fellowship is the Corporate Communion of those taking part in the Service Program.

The Birthday Thank Offering

The Birthday Thank Offering is gradually taking a deep hold in the Church. Each year more Church Schools are joining

in the offering. It is interesting to note that not alone are Church Schools taking part in this offering, but also individuals or groups outside the school who have learned of the project have sent their offerings to be joined to the others. The following letter is one example.

My dear Miss Withers:

I am sending you some money for the "birthday thank offering", for me and my three brothers. I am 7½. Robert is 4½. Marshall is 2½. Neil is 8 months. I belong to the Church School Service League.

Yours truly,

J. W. Roberts, Jr.

As you know, the first offering of $8,126.00 presented in Portland was used to build the "Pelican II," the launch for Bishop Rowe. The second offering will build and equip the Overs School in Liberia. The amount will be revealed on October 11th. (The amount proved to be $22,426.77.)

Money Gifts

If acts of service cannot be tabulated figures can be, and where they show the fruit of one's work they are an indication of the life and spirit of the individual.

It is interesting to note the growth of money gifts during the three years between 1922 and 1925.

The first table is a comparison of reports rendered in Portland 1922 for the year preceding, and in New Orleans 1925, for the year preceding the conference.

	Portland 1922	New Orleans 1925
Gifts in the Five Fields	$101,524.49	$244,680.17
Little Helper's Offering	2,516.14	7,664.42
Birthday Thank Offering	8,126.00	22,426.77
	$112,166.63	$274,771.36

The total amount for the Triennium 1922-1925 reported through the Church School Service League over and above the Lenten Offering is

Gifts in the Five Fields	$515,460.61
The Little Helpers	22,242.95
The Birthday Thank Offering	22,426.77
	$560,130.33

Christmas Box

The growth of the Christmas Box has kept pace with that of other phases of the Service Program. The following table shows this growth between 1922 and 1925.

	Portland 1922	New Orleans 1925
Number of Missions	410	614
Number of Children	34,492	60,681
Value of Boxes	$32,766.40	$53,802.00

The following table gives the aggregate number for the Triennium.

Number of Individuals	159,614
Value of Boxes	$148,310.86

Eighty-one dioceses and districts sent in reports to headquarters. A few reports were full; more were meagre, resulting in the fact that the above statement is only a partial picture of what is accomplished by the boys and girls of the Church. This report through the Church School Service League is the only effort in the national Church of obtaining a picture of service rendered and money given by boys and girls of the Church. What would be revealed if every parish and every diocese sent a full report?

Little Helpers

Turning from the work of the boys and girls in the Church Schools, we come to the work of the little ones at home.

The Little Helpers Department of the Church School consists of the babies and children of pre-kindergarten age. This department has two purposes:

1. To bring the privilege of Baptism to the attention of the parents.
2. To assist parents in the religious training of children during the first four or five years, that the babies may receive from earliest days continuous care by the Church.

The part the child takes is to pray for others, to give to others, and to learn what he can about God.

The gifts of the Little Helpers have made an advance in the past Triennium. Each year there are definite objectives for the offerings that are assigned by our Department of Religious Education, and recorded in the Treasurer's office. The mite box bears the inscription "For the work of the Church under the

direction of the National Council," therefore, it is expected that the offerings from the boxes shall be so used.

The new material issued in the last Triennium for the Little Helpers is as follows: 2,000 *Manuals for Leaders* of the Little Helpers, 40,000 *Questions and Answers* concerning the Little Helpers and 40,000 *Ideals of Parenthood.* These are proving of great value.

The Service Program in the Church School

No effort has been made on the part of the leaders in the Church School Service League movement to standardize any one form of Church School organization. The principles of world-wide service have been stated, the program presented, and the method for its development left to the individual Church School.

In 1922, I reported to you that 700 Church Schools were taking part in the program. I now have the pleasure of reporting that at present there are 2,253 Church Schools participating. Not all schools are carrying out the program to its fullest, but the fact that so large a number are taking part shows a great advance in understanding its flexibility and adaptability.

How Has the Program Been Used?

First, it has been developed in what we may call the three-session school, where pupils are excused from public schools on public-school time.

The hour of the afternoon session is used to expand the lesson begun on Sunday. Having found that it is impossible to cover worship, instruction, and service in one hour, in these schools the children give at least three quarters of an hour in addition to the public-school time to carry out the service program. Schools of this type are increasing.

There is the two-session school where the classes of the Church School are divided into groups, each group meeting during the week to carry out the Service Program. This type is the most usual. As one leader reported, "Week by week the work goes on and one cannot feel that the service, however simple, is acceptable to Him in Whose name it is done."

It is interesting to note that the program is frequently carried out through the Sunday sessions alone. In some schools of

this type the work is done on Sunday mornings. Five times a year a morning is set aside to cover in turn the Five Fields of Service. This is frequently the case in isolated missions where the minister visits the mission only once or twice a month. In other Church Schools the Service Program is carried out on Sunday morning after the instruction period, while the parents and older boys and girls are attending the Church service. In still other schools the work is assigned on Sunday and carried out during the week by classes or groups or individuals.

Another type is the Church School that does not have regular meetings, but meets in groups for work for the Christmas Boxes or for Mission Study, or for both. Some schools meet only when there is a call for special work in any one of the Five Fields of Service.

Another type of Church School is working the program through the Church School and its various organizations, to the end that there may be a unified program of service for the youth of the parish. (During the Triennium 1919-1922 the organizations of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, the Girls' Friendly Society, the Boy Scouts of America, and the Order of Sir Galahad had prepared a coördination of their programs with the program of the Church School Service League. In 1923, The Order of the Junior Daughters of the King officially incorporated its program with the program of the Church School Service League, and so they appear in the new edition of "Working Together." Boarding Schools are also incorporating the Service Program into their curricula.)

Rural Work

As the program of the Church School Service League is becoming better understood it proves to be most acceptable and adaptable in rural districts. It has been found that where the program is used, the responsibility for its development rests upon the chairman of the Church School Service League or some one appointed by her who will write individual letters: one who has untiring patience and sympathy in helping these untrained workers to understand their responsibilities and to feel that they are a part of the whole Church, not apart from it. She pays individual visits and answers patiently and carefully every question put to her by the inexperienced leaders.

Again, if space permitted I could give many interesting stories as to how the Church School Service League is carried on in rural fields and mission stations. Some of these stories can be found in our new book, "The Service Program of the Church School." Here you will see how the program has been carried out in a coal-mining town, on a mountain top, in a tiny mission of one man, five women, and one little girl, in the farm country, and in a cotton-mill town.

Mission Field

As the Church School Service League is proving its value in our own country, so it is slowly going forward in the mission field. It is merely a question of understanding and adapting the program to local conditions.

Printed Matter

Printed matter is of great assistance in promoting the program. Fourteen dioceses have bulletins that are sent out at the beginning of each season. In these are definite directions for carrying out the national program in the manner best suited to local conditions. The bulletins contain suggestions for work in the particular field of service in which the diocese is then working.

Fifteen other dioceses send out programs once a year, giving plans and suggestions for carrying out the program for the entire year.

Some dioceses send out special notices regarding Mission Study or the Birthday Thank Offering, or the work of the Little Helpers. Newark issued an illustrated leaflet for promoting the Christmas Box Work.

Nearly all of the dioceses sent letters to parish leaders containing information about Box Work, the Birthday Thank Offering, the Little Helpers, and other phases of the Service Program.

National Literature

Even with all the diocesan literature that is published there is a great demand at headquarters for literature on the various phases of the work.

In 1925, the number of pieces of free material sent out on request were as follows:

General Information—Prayer Cards, etc.	59,007
Little Helpers Work	206,700
Christmas Box Work	10,100
Birthday Thank Offering	135,175
Call to Service	150,000
	560,982

This did not include the Book of Programs, The Manual for Leaders of the Little Helpers, Working Together, or the Mission Study books. Four thousand, nine hundred and seventy copies of the Book of Programs are in the hands of leaders, leaving but 40 out of the edition of 5,000.

In Detroit, 1919, *In the Service of the King* was presented to the leaders as the first formulation in book form of the Church School Service League.

In Portland, 1922, *The Book of Programs of the Church School Service League* was presented as an enrichment of the program.

Now in 1925, the book, *The Service Program of the Church School* is presented to the leaders in New Orleans. The value of this book lies in the fact that it embodies *your* experiences in the field. It is our purpose to bind together the schools of our Church in the fellowship of Christ's Service.

The Christian Nurture Series

In the revision of the Christian Nurture Series the Service Program is recognized as furnishing abundant suggestions for each grade whereby the Sunday lesson may be expressed in service. The Block System with its seasonal motives has been incorporated into each of the manuals.

Who Has Led the Boys and Girls in the Work?

You will remember that in Portland you met with the Commission on the Church School Service League, a group of men and women who for three years had met regularly, doing constructive work in perfecting and promoting the Service Program.

After General Convention 1922, following a policy of economy, the Department of Religious Education merged seven of its existing commissions into one, The Church School Commission.

Provincial Committees

Instead, then, of having a representative commission of the Church School Service League the plan was adopted for having a committee of the Church School Service League in each province with whom I would meet accordingly. Provincial committees of the Church School Service League were appointed by the several Provincial Departments of Religious Education.

I have met with the committees of four provinces, the First, Second, Third and Fourth. Three other provinces, the Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth have each a provincial chairman.

The Educational Secretary of the Third Province arranged a trip for me through the Province, in which I visited six dioceses, holding institutes and conferences in them, and addressing diocesan conventions. This province was the first to form its provincial committee, and the first to have a meeting of diocesan leaders of all dioceses within the province. A three days institute was also held for the training of diocesan leaders. The committee also held an exhibit at the time of the Synod.

The Province of Sewanee holds an annual meeting of diocesan leaders each year at the Sewanee Summer School. The first meeting was held at Chattanooga where I was privileged to address the Provincial Synod.

The Province of New York and New Jersey has had meetings of its committee at which have been formulated plans for a meeting of diocesan leaders within the province.

The Chairman of the Sixth Province successfully arranged a trip for me through the Province. At this time I visited seven dioceses, spoke in churches, held institutes, and met with leaders both diocesan and parochial.

Diocesan Committees

In Portland, 1922, I reported to you that 68 dioceses had some kind of diocesan organization of the Church School Service League. It is now my pleasure to report that there are 77 dioceses and domestic missionary districts and three foreign missionary districts which have Church School Service League commissions or committees, varying in number from one member to eleven. There are four dioceses which are partially carrying out

the program without a diocesan committee of the Church School Service League, but with certain people appointed by the Bishop, the Department of Religious Education, or the Woman's Auxiliary, to have charge of this work. Two dioceses still retain the Junior Auxiliary, Vermont and Virginia. This makes a total of 86 dioceses and missionary districts with which the National Secretary of the Church School Service League has contact. Three hundred and thirty-two diocesan leaders are carrying forward the program. With three domestic missionary districts the Church School Service League has no contact.

The dioceses which have formed committees of the Church School Service League since 1922 are: Easton, West Virginia, Alabama, Atlanta, Texas, Upper South Carolina, Fond du Lac, Western Nebraska, Eastern Oregon, Idaho, New York, Porto Rico, Cuba, Springfield, Southwestern Virginia, North Texas, West Missouri, Honolulu, Florida, and South Florida.

I cannot let this portion of my report pass without a comment upon the three foreign missionary district committees. Cuba was the first to form its committee. To meet the need of Cuban leaders, and the boys and girls, the Five Fields of Service and the Church School Service League Prayer have been translated into Spanish. Bishop Hulse is desirous of having all the Church Schools in Cuba adopt the program of the Church School Service League. Porto Rico has its supervisor. She is appointed by Bishop Colmore, who is anxious that the Church School Service League shall go forward in the Island.

Bishop LaMothe of Honolulu has appointed a district supervisor. While China and Japan have no district supervisors, units of the League are being started in both countries.

Diocesan Meetings

It is interesting to know how the various dioceses are holding meetings. Eighteen are having annual meetings of leaders or rallies of boys and girls. Five have reported that their annual meetings were held in conjunction with the Presentation of the Lenten Offering.

The Day of Offerings of Massachusetts is the time when the Lenten Offering is presented, and reports are given by Church Schools in various ways.

Bethlehem begins its annual meeting Friday night with a conference and pageant. Saturday morning starts with Holy Communion and presentation of the Lenten Offering. At 11:30 the Church School Service League officers have their business meeting. After luncheon the reports are rendered by boys and girls of service accomplished in the Five Fields.

Cuba has an annual Church School Institute in which the Church School Service League has its place upon the program. By this conference and an exhibit of work the various missions are helped to an understanding of the program.

Institute classes and conferences are held by the majority of dioceses in which the Church Schools are helped to a fuller understanding of the privilege of service. Thus we see that where the program is understood, there its value is recognized and there it will be followed.

Leadership

Leadership is what the Church is pleading for. Where can we look for its early development save in the Church School? We are given a motto for an ideal education. "Not things to know but things to do." Therefore, the Church School must have its Service Program if it is to accomplish this ideal. But it is not enough for the child simply to follow direction in service work. Such directed work keeps the child in his non-initiative life and produces followers—not leaders. Leadership in the Church will be developed just so far as we give our boys and girls an opportunity for original thought and expression and allow them to share in forming and carrying out their plans, and nowhere in the Church School is there a greater opportunity for this development than as the boys and girls together carry out the Service Program.

Conclusion

And so I bring my report to a close. In these days immediately before us we are to have opportunities of finding from one another better ways of helping our boys and girls to know the joy and the privilege of service to our Lord Jesus Christ who taught His disciples how to serve through serving with them.

1 Ed. 4-26. 7M. F. T.